

I am writing to provide comments to the FCC on the Erate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. As an 80% Erate deductible school district in deep East Texas, Erate has supported our 1:1 initiative for the past 4 years. Our stakeholders utilize blogs, websites, simulations, robotics, 3rd-party providers, Epsilen, Edmodo, Google Apps, YouTube, iTunesU, Discovery Learning, iStation, Study Island, and many other digital resources to give our students the engaging, relevant, and enhanced curriculum. We are a Power on Texas school district premired by the Texas Education Agency. We have accomplished this despite the fact that Arp does not have access to a local library or community center. We have been able to provide a global education using Erate supported infrastructure and state grants. Our current struggle involves a lack of access to the home. The Connect Texas website documents our lack of access in over 50% of our rural homes. This is detrimental to our digital learning initiatives.

Although some resources can be downloaded to the device for take-home extended learning opportunities, the engaging and interactive online resources are not available. The take-home device often becomes nothing more than an electronic version of a text book. Our request is to expand the support of 3G, 4G, and LTE technologies for the home (community wireless initiatives might also fall under this domain). Students who are homebound, ill, or in need of acceleration, remediation, or review would benefit tremendously from expanding and extending the learning environment beyond the walls of the classroom. We believe this is the real goal of online digital educational opportunities. Without the help of discounts, our economically disadvantaged students will never be able to afford the same opportunities as the rest of the students.

We would like to be able to afford access points for these students and check them out from our campuses for limited home use sessions. We find that ESL students, special education students, learning disabled students and economically disadvantaged students benefit from these experiences. We have had a limited pilot in our district under a Texas Education Agency grant. What we found was that not only students benefited from this school-supplied access, but siblings and parents were able to benefit as well. Please consider looking into this capability to support true expanded digital learning.